

Mainstreaming core skills in training programmes



Summary

People 1st International partnered with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support the PROSPECTS programme in mainstreaming core skills for the 21st century into training programmes by equipping course developers, instructors and assessors with the tools to be able to embed essential core skills into TVET and work-based learning teaching and learning. This initiative was implemented across eight countries in the Middle East, North Africa and East Africa to enhance the employability of refugees and local communities by equipping them with essential professional and personal skills.

Background

The rapid evolution of the global labour market, driven by technological change, globalisation, green economy shifts and demographic trends, has resulted in new job roles and skill mismatches. These challenges were further increased by the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated shifts in employment and training needs.

To address these changes, ILO identified 'Core Skills for life and work in the 21st century', a global framework, crucial for workforce adaptability. However, there was a gap in structured training solutions to help employers and education institutions of refugees and local workers integrate these skills into their employment pathways. The challenge was to translate ILO's core skills framework into practical, competency-based training that could be widely used by trainers, employers and policymakers in PROSPECTS programme countries.

Our solutions

We delivered a structured skills intervention to mainstream core skills into training programmes, focusing on:

Reviewing global best practices

We conducted an in-depth analysis of the ILO Core Skills Framework and examined case studies from five countries, including PROSPECTS regions to inform training design.

Client: International Labour Organization

“ We really value the technical capacity and the flexibility of People 1st International. The work we have done together has been in the true spirit of partnership and we are very happy with the three modules that are now ready for course developers, instructors and assessors on how to mainstream core work skills. We are now going to pilot them before releasing them as a global product.”

- Patrick Daru, Head of Unit, Training Excellence, ILO

Consultation and capacity building

Virtual consultation sessions were held with ILO PROSPECTS staff and partners, following which we designed and developed three competency-based training courses for curriculum developers, instructors and assessors. Structured guidance materials were developed that included real-world examples, participative, learner-centred exercises and assessment tools to support capacity building.

Finalisation of integrated guidance

A revised policy brief and integrated guidance on core skills was developed to support sustainable implementation and provide ongoing support to training providers and policymakers to facilitate its integration into national frameworks.

Outcome / impact:

The project successfully bridged the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that core skills are embedded in real-world training programmes that directly benefit workers, employers and national economies.

Key outcomes include:

- **Strengthened training programmes:** The newly developed courses offer a structured, competency-based approach to embedding core skills, ensuring better workforce preparation.
- **Enhanced capacity of trainers and assessors:** By equipping instructors with practical, applied training methods, the intervention improved the ability of trainers to deliver high-quality, skills-focused education.
- **Improved workforce readiness:** Refugees and local communities now have greater access to structured core skills training, increasing their employability and resilience in evolving job markets.
- **Policy and system-level impact:** The revised policy brief and integrated guidance support policymakers in embedding core skills training into national education and workforce strategies, ensuring long-term sustainability.
- **Economic and employment benefits:** By addressing skill mismatches and workforce gaps, this initiative contributes to stronger labour market integration, greater economic inclusion and improved employment opportunities in the PROSPECTS programme countries.

About People 1st International

People 1st International partners with industry, development banks, government agencies, NGOs and education providers to create sustainable approaches to workforce development.

Providing consultancy, research and training solutions globally, we develop skilled, productive and inclusive workforces that help drive social and economic growth.

With over 50 years' experience in developing effective skills models and technical vocational education and training strategies, we use our unparalleled expertise to develop collaborative partnerships that foster positive change.

Building on our heritage as a sector skills council, we are proud to have worked in more than 50 countries to deliver responsive skills solutions that challenge social and gender exclusion, address the barriers to work and support continuous professional development.

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